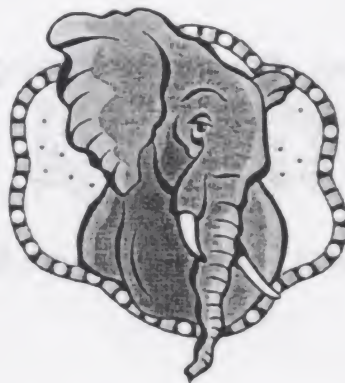


Have You Read Peter Rozing?  
Or  
A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to  
the Criminology Section

By  
KK Gordon



Cast

Chris: A disgruntled postal employee  
Trish: A grad student

Setting

All action takes place in a one room cabin; A young woman who has been loosely tied to a chair begins to wake; Behind her, at an old desk, sits a disgruntled man in his late 20s; On the desk are a TV, which faces the audience; a book bag; several books; and a pair of clunky red shoes; In the foreground is an old video camera on a tripod; In the background there is a refrigerator

## Curtain rises

- Trish: (Tossing her head to and fro) No, no, no! Please don't! No!
- Chris: (Switching on the TV and the camera) A star is born! At last you're awake. (Kneels at her feet and puts the red shoes on her) It must have been the red shoes, she thought. (Stands up) There! That should help you feel a little less vulnerable.
- Trish: (Groggily) Where am I?
- Chris: Over the hills and far, far away...
- Trish: Where am I?
- Chris: Xanadu!
- Trish: Who are you?
- Chris: Kubla Khan.
- Trish: (Shaking her head) No...
- Chris: (Steps behind her) Beware... Beware his flashing eyes and his... His... Something hair...
- Trish: Where am I?
- Chris: Would you like some water? Trish! Would you like some water?!
- Trish: Yes.
- Chris: (Walks to the refrigerator and pours a glass of water) I must warn you it won't be clean...
- Trish: What?
- Chris: It won't be clean. (Returns to Trish; Kneels beside her with the glass of water) The water, that is... You're still out of it. You know, you went under so easily - almost instantly - and I wasn't exactly ready. Well, I didn't expect to see you tonight - you weren't there last week - I didn't even have to tie you up... I couldn't... I didn't have rope. I just left you in the van and went back inside the mall. I didn't want to chance going home, so I picked up this piece of junk (Points to the camera; Walks over to it and plays with it) at the pawn shop. Look at it! It's so old and ugly it's almost beautiful again. Can you drink? (Returns to Trish's side and tips the glass up to her lips; Trish coughs) Easy...



Trish: (Slightly more awake) Where am I?

Chris: Safe.

Trish: (Looking about her) I'm tied up!

Chris: I've noticed!

Trish: Who are you?

Chris: You should know better than that, Trish!

Trish: Who are you?

Chris: (In an affected "macho-man" voice) I could tell you, but then I'd have to kill you.  
(In his normal voice) I've always wanted to say that!

Trish: Really, who are you?

Chris: You can call me Chris... Short for Christian.

Trish: Unite me.

Chris: No.

Trish: Why am I here?

Chris: In due time... First, tell me about yourself.

Trish: Did you call my sister?

Chris: Why?

Trish: Did you call Lynn with... With your ransom demands?

Chris: No.

Trish: You picked the wrong girl to kidnap. It's just me and Lynn and we're both grad students... Almost penniless...

Chris: That's too bad...

Trish: But she'll have the police looking for me!

Chris: (Coldly) You won't be here that long.

Trish: (Stunned) What do you mean?

Chris: I'm a postal employee!

Trish: Oh God!

Chris: What?

Trish: Postal!

Chris: Yes, I work for the post office. I know what you're thinking... "Just like the Son of Sam."

Trish: No, I wasn't!

Chris: He was a carrier... I'm in administration!

Trish: What are you going to do with me?

Chris: (Seemingly oblivious to her) Still, it's hectic... Everything at the post office is hectic. We have unofficial pools on who's going to lose it next.

Trish: Please let me go!

Chris: Hey! I guess Gus just won, right?

Trish: Please...

Chris: I work ten to twelve hours a day, I grow morning glories and dusty oscar in my back yard. Before work, the flowers are beautiful and at night I sit outside with a beer and some poetry and watch the dusty oscar sway in the breeze. It relaxes me.

Trish: Mister...

Chris: (Snaps out of his reverie) What?

Trish: What are you going to do?

Chris: I have no life. I grow a few plants and fancy myself a writer, but I have no life...

Trish: What are you going to do with me?

Chris: I'm going to rape you and kill you - I'm just not sure of the order yet... Happy?  
(Walks to the camera and adjusts it; Trish squirms uncomfortably) I played baseball - semi-pro - Mexican clubs mostly, 'til I blew out my shoulder. That was a good life... Do you want a drink?

Trish: Yes, please.



Chris: (Holds the glass up to her lips) Do you like Elvis?

Trish: Excuse me?!

Chris: Do you like Elvis Presley?

Trish: Why?

Chris: Just curious...

Trish: What do you want me to say?

Chris: It's not a trick question... Well?

Trish: "Well," what?

Chris: Are you into "The King?"

Trish: Yes.

Chris: What's your favorite song?

Trish: I don't know... I like them all.

Chris: I thought you said you were a fan?

Trish: He was dead before I was born!

Chris: Then you were lying.

Trish: No.

Chris: Don't lie to me, Trish... I need Truth from you.

Trish: I wasn't lying! i just don't know the names of his songs.

Chris: How could you not?

Trish: I grew up on Duran Duran and The Go Gos!

Chris: I'm sorry to hear that.

Trish: Mister?

Chris: When I was a kid, I thought Elvis was my dad. It's true. My dad was a long distance truck driver and I hardly ever saw him. One day he was sitting at the kitchen table

drinking coffee with my mother, and I didn't recognize him, so I walked up to him and asked "Who are you?" He said "Who do you think I am?" and with all the sincerity a four year old could muster, I blurted out "Elvis!," I mean, after all, you never saw the two of them in the same place at the same time. Well... Enough about me! Tell me about you!

Trish: What do you want to know?

Chris: Why serial killers?

Trish: Excuse me?

Chris: Why do you like serial killers?

Trish: Like them?!

Chris: Every time I've ever seen you, you've had your nose in a book about serial killers.

Trish: I don't like them.

Chris: Then why are you always reading about them?

Trish: To learn.

Chris: They kill people! End of lesson. Learn what?!

Trish: Nothing.

Chris: How to protect yourself from them?

Trish: Sure!

Chris: You didn't learn much! You were easy pickin's.

Trish: I like the pretty pictures, all right?!

Chris: Bullshit.

Trish: So do cows.

Chris: Why do you like serial killers?

Trish: What are you going to do with me?

Chris: That depends.

Trish: On what?



Chris: On how you answer my question.

Trish: What question?

Chris: Why do you like serial killers?

Trish: What do you want me to say?

Chris: I just want you to answer the question!

Trish: I already did!

Chris: No, you didn't!

Trish: I said I didn't like them.

Chris: Then why are you always reading about them?

Trish: I told you.

Chris: Told me what?

Trish: I read about them to learn about them.

Chris: Why?

Trish: They scare me.

Chris: They scare you?

Trish: That surprises you?

Chris: No. You like scaring yourself?

Trish: Freud once said "Our greatest fears before our greatest obsessions..." "Whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger."

Chris: Nietzsche.

Trish: (In a voice of mock admiration) He shoots... And he scores!

Chris: (Mimicking her voice) She's a wise ass!

Trish: (Sarcastically) One of the drawbacks of praying on co-eds.

Chris: Would you like to be gassed?

Trish: Would it matter?

Chris: Not to me.

Trish: What are you going to do to me?

Chris: Tell me about serial killers.

Trish: Why?

Chris: Would you rather be gassed?

Trish: What do you want to know?

Chris: Just the basics.

Trish: They kill people – end of lesson.

Chris: (Makes a fist then cools off) Do you have a favorite?

Trish: No, I love them all.

Chris: So, you do want to be gassed!

Trish: Dahmer.

Chris: Not very original.

Trish: Edmund Kemper. He's fascinating, too.

Chris: I've never heard of him.

Trish: No one has.

Chris: How many did he kill?

Trish: Twelve. Officially eleven. His first victim was never found. His first victim after his grandparents, that is...

Chris: He killed his grandparents?

Trish: Yes. He told the cops "I just wanted to see what it would be like to kill grandma." He stashed her in the barn and then killed his grandfather just so he wouldn't find her.

Chris: He was locked up, wasn't he?



Trish: He was a juvenile. By the time his record was cleared he was six-foot-eight-inches and 280 pounds of maternal issues and control problems just waiting to go off, plus his IQ was measured at 130.

Chris: What else do you know?

Trish: I don't know what you're looking for.

Chris: ~~Just tell me!~~ **Just talk**

Trish: There are different types... Different kinds of victims, methods, etc. Kemper's level of intelligence puts him in the highly organized offender category like Ted Bundy. For contrast – the disorganized type – there's Richard Trenton, the Vampire Killer. Disorganized killers are usually severely incapacitated by mental illness throughout their killings. They are caught faster because they act on pure impulse and leave plenty of evidence. They are more vicious, their crimes tend to be more localized, and if they hide a body at all it's never far from the scene of the crime. Then there are visionary killers. They kill in response to voices or visions, like the Son of Sam.

Chris: Or Joan of Arc.

Trish: There's a difference...

Chris: I know. Go on.

Trish: Could I have some more water, please? (Chris tilts the glass to her lips) Then there are mission-oriented killers. They believe they were born to rid society of a certain target group, such as the elderly, prostitutes, children, or a particular racial or ethnic group. And there are hedonistic killers. These are stereotypically thrill-seekers or lust oriented...

Chris: It's self-explanatory. Anything else?

Trish: Power and control freaks.

Chris: Stop!

Trish: Why?

Chris: You're tied to a chair.

Trish: Cutting too close to the bone?

Chris: No, I think you're enjoying this a bit too much.

Trish: I didn't mean to spoil your fantasy.

Chris: Why do you need to know so much about serial killers?

Trish: I'm preparing a paper.

Chris: Criminology?

Trish: Comparative literature.

Chris: Comparative literature?!

Trish: Yes.

Chris: Who are comparing Dahmer and Company too?

Trish: Have you read Ayn Rand?

Chris: The pornographer?

Trish: Hardly.

Chris: Henry Miller's old girlfriend?

Trish: You mean Anais Nin.

Chris: I always get those two confused.

Trish: Anais Nin wrote erotica.

Chris: Same difference.

Trish: Not at all.

Chris: You say potato, I say porno. What about Ayn Rand?

Trish: Have you read her?

Chris: No.

Trish: (Disdainfully) Then explaining my paper would be pointless.

Chris: Don't look at me like that.

Trish: Like what?

Chris: Like I'm stupid!



Trish: I didn't say you were.

Chris: I just haven't read the same books you have.

Trish: I didn't say anything...

Chris: I know what she wrote. "The Fountainhead" and "Achilles Shrugged." I just haven't gotten around to them yet.

Trish: (Matter-of-factly) Atlas.

Chris: What?

Trish: "Atlas Shrugged."

Chris: Yeah. He shrugged too. What makes Ayn Rand so special.

Trish: She was a great writer.

Chris: Says who?

Trish: What do you mean?

Chris: Who reads Ayn Rand?

Trish: Lots of people.

Chris: I never hear people talking about "Atlas Shrugged."

Trish: "There are more things in Heaven and Earth that are dreamt of in your philosophy."

Chris: That's Shakespeare.

Trish: No kidding.

Chris: Everyone knows Shakespeare was a great writer, but for all I know, I have Ayn Rand's entire fan club tied to a chair.

Trish: Oh there's more than just me! Give me a phone and we'll have an impromptu salon.

Chris: That's it. I'm gassing you 'til you feel a bit more cooperative.

Trish: (Incredulously) You want my cooperation?!

Chris: Yes. That's why you're here!

Trish: With what?

Chris: Tell me about Ayn Rand first.

Trish: Why?

Chris: Because she's a great writer.

Trish: You don't care.

Chris: But I do care. I care very much...

Trish: If I do tell you, what's in it for me?

Chris: I won't kill you.

Trish: How wonderful! You didn't bring me here to kill me.

Chris: Oh really?!

Trish: Oh really!

Chris: How do you know?

Trish: You don't fit the profile.

Chris: What profile?

Trish: You're not very organized. You had thought of doing this – you had chloroform on hand – but you didn't know you were doing this tonight. That's why you had to leave me in the van while you went back to buy rope and the camera. You did this on impulse, and if you were an impulse killer I'd be dead and buried already. No, this was some kind of fantasy. Unfortunately for you, I'm not the victim of your dreams, and you want out of this faster than a blind date with a fat woman!

Chris: What's your major?

Trish: Comparative Lit.

Chris: (Crosses over to the table and examines the books in her bookbag) A minor in psychology?

Trish: Oh, you caught me! Why don't you just let me go?

Chris: (There is a pause while he reads a book jacket) Not before you tell me about rational selfishness.



Trish: (Surprised) How do you know about that?

Chris: How do you know about it?

Trish: I've read Ayn Rand!

Chris: Have you?

Trish: Yes!

Chris: Yeah, but I don't think you understand her.

Trish: What do you mean I don't understand her? You're the one who didn't know she existed!

Chris: I didn't say I didn't know who she was. I just said I hadn't read her yet, and I'm not going to because I think she's an asshole!

Trish: How can you say that if you haven't read her work?

Chris: Because, unlike you, I understand rational selfishness.

Trish: How can you understand rational selfishness if you haven't read Ayn Rand?

Chris: Rational selfishness is when an individual unashamedly sees his own fulfillment as the highest moral pleasure in life.

Trish: How do you know that?

Chris: (Holds up a book) Book jacket. (Tosses book behind him)

Trish: You can't judge the woman's work from something you read on a book jacket!

Chris: I sure can!

Trish: That's simple ignorance!

Chris: If that's what she truly believes, she's the one who's ignorant!

Trish: "The Fountainhead" is an enlightened piece of literature!

Chris: What about other people?

Trish: The greatest achievements of mankind have been made by individuals who single-mindedly pursued their own ambitions, thereby producing ideas, works of art, and products that enrich our lives.

Chris: What about other people?

Trish: Rational selfishness...

Chris: ...is only a pseudonym for morbid self-interest. Tell me what she thinks about other people.

Trish: She valued friendship highly.

Chris: And Hitler loved his dogs. So what?

Trish: I'm not having this conversation any longer.

Chris: I'm afraid you have no choice.

Trish: It's pointless.

Chris: Do you believe in God?

Trish: I know where this is going...

Chris: Where?

Trish: Ayn Rand believed altruism was a lie based on the reaping of egotistical rewards.

Chris: Fuck Ayn Rand! Do you believe in God?

Trish: Why?

Chris: Do you believe in God – Yes or no?

Trish: (Shakily) Yes.

Chris: Really?!

Trish: Yes.

Chris: No, you're just saying that because I scared you. You were pretty convinced I wasn't a killer 'til I started screaming about God. You're an atheist, aren't you?

Trish: No.

Chris: Tell the truth...

Trish: Agnostic.



Chris: That's too bad. That's really too bad, because you should love God. You, Miss Trish, should really love God, and I'm not getting all Christian on you. You should love God because He's the ultimate serial killer. Since the beginning of time He's been up there in heaven like a gunman in a tower picking us off one by one. This friend of mine, Dawn - a dancer - she says "Someday... Someday soon, He's gonna try His Hand at mass murder. He's gonna kill us all and then sort things out for Himself. All cuz we never ask 'What about other people?'"

Trish: Revelations.

Chris: (Momentarily lost in thought) Yes... What about Peter Rozing?

Trish: Excuse me?!

Chris: Have you ever heard about Peter Rozing?

Trish: No.

Chris: Just like your friend... What was his name? Was it Kemper? No one ever has...

Trish: Was he a serial killer?

Chris: (With a laugh) No. He's a writer. He's my favorite writer.

Trish: What has he written?

Chris: I don't want to be this angry  
At the crowd around my shoulders  
I want to stop hiding in doorways  
And stealing fruit  
I have to lose the pin-up girls  
I keep tacked under my baseball cap  
Cuz I can't let the world know  
I'm that much of a virgin  
I don't want to be that scared  
And more than that  
I can't explode  
Just wanna stay  
Slow and low  
Like a dusted angel  
Coming down

A boy wrestles with his young mother  
At the bus stop  
Simply because he can't  
Stand still  
And I can't stay still

I think I could go naked  
In winter and survive longer  
Than if I stopped  
Stopped. Stopped

Here  
And stayed the boy I am  
Kinda quiet... kinda tired  
Kinda sweet and shy  
If I stopped here  
I'd die  
Die wanting to be that kid  
In Salvation Army pants  
That kid  
So safe in  
His mother's arms

(To Trish) What do you think?

Trish: Strange.

Chris: Strange?! It's poetry!

Trish: Strange, but beautiful.

Chris: Why strange?

Trish: It's just I've never heard anything like that before.

Chris: Not many people have.

Trish: What era is he from?

Chris: Era? What do you mean?

Trish: When did he write that?

Chris: Last week.

Trish: Then how do you know... Where was it published?

Chris: He's nineteen.

Trish: He has a very mature voice for nineteen.

Chris: He's got a great voice period. I want to be just like him. It's not art reflecting life or vice versa. It's life as art. No whistles, no bells, no one gets killed, nothing blows up, girls don't even take their shirts off, and it's still wonderful. So that's why you're here.



Trish: Because of some poem?

Chris: No. Because of the script. (Produces a script from the desk) This script right here.

Trish: I'm confused.

Chris: Research. Peter started this play about a girl tied to a chair. An absurdist piece, but he abandoned it because he couldn't make it believable.

Trish: That's not a necessity for an absurdist piece...

Chris: No, but I thought I could make it real, and like I said that's why you're here – so I could finish it.

Trish: (Testily) Some play?!

Chris: It's about bondage – in a metaphysical sense – I understand that, but I needed to know what it feels like to be tied to a chair.

Trish: You kidnapped me for character research?

Chris: Carpe diem!

Trish: You didn't need to kidnap me.

Chris: I didn't know I was going to do this. I can't believe I did, but the research I needed is done. It's all on tape. The only thing I want now is for you to read through the script with me, then I'll let you go.

Trish: This is a joke! A very sick joke!

Chris: I can imagine what you're feeling.

Trish: No, you can't.

Chris: OK, I guess not, but we're almost done...

Trish: "Girl Tied To A Chair – An Absurdist Piece." It won't fly.

Chris: I'm not asking you to produce it!

Trish: Besides, it's been done.

Chris: That's what they told Shakespeare!

Trish: "Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down," "Boxing Helena..."

Chris: Those were love stories... This is an absurdist piece like "Waiting For Godot."

Trish: Please.

Chris: What?

Trish: It's been done.

Chris: So what?

Trish: It's not original.

Chris: I know.

Trish: It's not even yours!

Chris: It wasn't, but I've worked on it, made some changes...

Trish: Did you have written permission?

Chris: No.

Trish: Then it's plagiarized!

Chris: Trish!

Trish: What?

Chris: Anthropologists have recently recovered and dated what they believe to be the oldest surviving piece of poetic writing ever found. It's a four thousand year old piece of papyrus.

Trish: Ooh!

Chris: Do you know what it says?

Trish: Not off hand.

Chris: It reads "If only I had words that were my own to describe these feelings."

Trish: (Sarcastically) Fascinating!

Chris: Don't you get it?

Trish: Get what?



Chris: The oldest surviving piece of literature in the world is about unoriginality and writer's block. I had a case of writer's block the size of the Berlin Wall, but it's come down now.

Trish: And that gives you the right to kidnap me?!

Chris: Trish!

Trish: What?

Chris: You are tied to a chair! When you read through this script, I'll let you go. Let that motivate you.

Trish: Fine. Give me the script.

Chris: (Loosens Trish's hands and gives her the script) Do you want to take a moment to give it a read through?

Trish: No. I'll be fine.

Chris: Don't cold read!

Trish: I'll be fine. I know the character!

Chris: But don't you...

Trish: I've acted before.

Chris: Hand the girl a script and she thinks she's Barbra Streisand.

Trish: Let's just get this over with!

Chris: Take your time... Feel it!

Trish: Oh I'll feel it all right! Can we start?!

Chris: Do you want me to fix your hair?

Trish: No!

Chris: Suit yourself! (Moves behind the camera, looks through lens) Just a slight adjustment to the camera... Ready?

Trish: Yes.

Chris: I'll be outside 'til I hear my queue. Start whenever you feel it. (Exits; Trish rolls her eyes)

Trish: (Reads from the script) I'm thirsty. Should I try to hum something?

Chris: (Rushes in) Wait.

Trish: What?!

Chris: Are you thirsty?

Trish: A little!

Chris: No, you're very thirsty! You're acting. Feel it! You know what I mean?

Trish: Yes!

Chris: Let's do it again... Ready? (Trish nods; Chris exits)

Trish: I'm thirsty.

Chris: (Enters) No, Trish! You are suffering! You haven't had a drink in days! I need more! More! More thirst!

Trish: OK!

Chris: No, you're not OK! You're thirsty! You're desperate. Feel it!

Trish: I get it... I get it! Now get out of here!

Chris: OK. Go ahead. (Exits)

Trish: Oh! I'm thirsty... Should I try to hum something? I wonder if he'd mind... (Enter Chris) Do you mind?

Chris: What?

Trish: Do you mind?

Chris: Mind what?

Trish: Do you mind me humming? Passing the time? Making the best of it?

Chris: Where you... No, that's fine... What were you humming?

Trish: Oh nothing! So, the Feds bust in yet?

Chris: No.



Trish: I didn't think so.

Chris: No.

Trish: Um... Excuse me. I hate to impose, but could I bother you for a drink? Water is fine.

Chris: (Lost in thought) But it won't be clean.

Trish: The water?

Chris: No... Sure, yes... No, it's fine... What?

Trish: Ah! My water!

Chris: Oh yeah!

Trish: Right. (Chris gives her water)

Chris: You know it's New Year's Eve?

Trish: No, it's not.

Chris: Oh!

Trish: No.

Chris: No.... Cut! OK Trish, that wasn't too bad.

Trish: I'm not thrilled. Do you want to do it again?

Chris: No. Not enough time, but in this next part I want you to get real testy with me.

Trish: No problem!

Chris: All right. You're a real unamused bitch. You're not afraid. You're not... I don't know... You just tear into me, especially with the "You tied yourself to this same chair just so you could scream for help." OK? Ready? (Trish nods) All right, why do you think I did this? Why do you think I picked you?

Trish: Your guess is as good as mine!

Chris: Sure.

Trish: So. Small, unmarked bills for a small, unmarked man? Used bills, wrinkled bills, regular everyday grocery shopping bills, all for you! A full tank of gas for a guy who's been running on empty? A way out for a guy who couldn't find a way in? That's it, isn't it? So, what are your demands?

Chris: I'm not a very demanding sort of person.

Trish: (Looking about her) I can see that!

Chris: A few more chairs, some more rope, a bigger place maybe?

Trish: A gag.

Chris: A gag. Oh yeah, you're with out a gag...

Trish: Yes, I've noticed.

Chris: Well?

Trish: I could call for help, you know.

Chris: No one would hear you.

Trish: Yes, I know.

Chris: How can you know unless you try?

Trish: I know you've tried...

Chris: What are you getting at?

Trish: I have the strangest feeling... No... I know that you've been here before.

Chris: What?

Trish: I know no one would hear me, because no one ever heard you. You've been here before. You tied yourself to this chair just so you could scream for help, but no one ever came to your rescue... (Confusedly) Pause?

Chris: What's wrong?

Trish: What?

Chris: What's wrong?

Trish: It's your line.

Chris: No, it's not!

Trish: Yes, it is.



Chris: No... You say "Someone... Anyone... Please..."

Trish: That's not what the script says.

Chris: What are you talking about?

Trish: According to the script, the next line is yours.

Chris: What is it?

Trish: "At times Keri was brighter than the sun."

Chris: You're kidding!

Trish: No.

Chris: They must be out of order. Let me see that... (Takes the script from Trish and flips through it) Oh shit!

Trish: What?

Chris: Goddamn it! I'm missing a whole page!

Trish: Maybe you left it in the van...

Chris: No... Goddamn it... Christ! I'm so stupid!

Trish: It's all right...

Chris: I was making notes on the script. I must have left it a work. Fuck, I'm stupid!

Trish: Relax.

Chris: Shut up!

Trish: Just calm down...

Chris: I said shut the fuck up! (Cools down) I'm sorry... I'm sorry.

Trish: There's some good work on this page. "I wanted to scoop her up and waltz her around in her bare feet 'til we flew like dizzy angels."

Chris: Those are my lines.

Trish: And "Autumn leaves can't help loving the wind..."

Chris: Don't read anymore!

Trish: Why?!

Chris: It's ruined now.

Trish: No, it's not! There really is good work here!

Chris: Trish.

Trish: Yes?

Chris: Would you shut the fuck up already?

Trish: What?!

Chris: Shut up, shut up, shut the fuck up! (Pulls his arm back as if to strike her)

Trish: Don't.

Chris: (Yelling) Don't what?

Trish: (Panicking) Please!

Chris: What are you afraid of? Me?! Don't be afraid of me, I'm an idiot, a stupid, stinking coward who hasn't made the right decision since... Since... Hell... Four years ago. I quit baseball. I left the locker room, went to the hotel room, and I took a gun. (Pulls a gun from the desk drawer) This gun. I shoved it all the way back to my tonsils, and I made a decision. Right then and there I made a decision. Do you know what I decided, Trish?

Trish: You decided to live.

Chris: No. Like I said, I'm a coward. Suicide was never really on the table. Like always, I made the wrong decision. (Slams the gun to the ground and stomps on it)

Trish: (Alarmed) Be careful! It could go off!

Chris: (Pauses; Picks up the gun) What, this?

Trish: Yes.

Chris: Oh yeah! This baby could go off all right. And wouldn't it be terrible if it went off right in your lovely little face? (Waves the gun at her)

Trish: No.

Chris: (Begins to tighten her bonds to the chair) Yes.



Trish: You're hurting me!

Chris: Guess what, Trish? It hurts to be murdered after all!

Trish: Stop it! Please!

Chris: (Raving) Just wait 'til I get all Jackson Pollack with your brains, Trish. When the cops find what's left of you, you'll end up one of those pretty pictures in those books you love so much. Chris's first victim, sandwiched right between Berkowitz and Dahmer in the Encyclopedia of Serial Killers. We'll both be famous and I'll tell everyone "The dogs made me do it." Just like Sammy did...

Trish: (Hysterical) No... Please don't!

Chris: Why?!

Trish: Don't.

Chris: Why, Trish?

Trish: Don't. Just don't.

Chris: All right then. How about this? (Points gun to his head)

Trish: Don't!

Chris: (Pulls the trigger) This gun could go off if it was loaded, but it's not. It never was. I never had any real power... Stupid! (Throws gun and exits)

Trish: (Composes herself) Hey! Hey, Mister! Where did you go? Don't leave me! Are you there? Where are you?!

Chris: I'm here. Just needed cigarettes. Do you smoke?

Trish: Yes.

Chris: Want one?

Trish: Please!

Chris: (Loosens her bonds and gives her a cigarette) For the lady.

Trish: Your play...

Chris: What about it?

Trish: It's not real...

Chris: No.

Trish: No. Not at all...

Chris: It's meant to be an absurdist piece.

Trish: You wanted it to be real, didn't you? That's why you brought me here. That's why you tied me to this chair. You wanted it to be real, but it's not.

Chris: I know.

Trish: It's missing something. Something to distract the audience...

Chris: Like what?

Trish: An elephant!

Chris: An elephant?!

Trish: Yeah... Yeah!

Chris: Why an elephant?

Trish: I forget.

Chris: What do you forget?

Trish: Where did you go?

Chris: Just outside to get cigarettes.

Trish: I thought you were leaving.

Chris: No.

Trish: Good.

Chris: What's wrong?

Trish: I guess it was a fable or maybe a metaphor for existentialism.

Chris: What was?

Trish: The elephant.



Chris: What are you talking about?

Trish: The thing that was always in the room, always, before anyone got there. No one ever said anything about it. Too obvious to react to, it got to be incidental after a while...

Chris: What got to be incidental?

Trish: The elephant.

Chris: What elephant?

Trish: The one in his room.

Chris: Whose room?!

Trish: Ivo Gallette.

Chris: Who's he?

Trish: The Elephant Man. No one... The girls never asked about the elephant. Afraid they would seem stupid, they would just think there was a circus in town. They wouldn't bring it up and eventually they forgot that it was even there. They'd just resume doing whatever they were doing in the room in the first place, regardless of or in spite of the fucking elephant no one acknowledged...

Chris: I don't understand at all...

Trish: He was an art instructor at the college I did my undergraduate work at.

Chris: The Elephant Man?!

Trish: Kinda weird, but harmless they'd say... He called me up to see if he could lure me over. "I feel like hanging out, Trish... I promise not to hit on you... Just art talk and a pot of tea..." We looked at art books and his portfolio, which spanned two decades. We talked like old friends over too many cigarettes, lounged around like cats and played "Sorry." "Just so you know, Sugar Kitten, I didn't invite you here to fuck you..."

Chris: The thought never crossed your mind...

Trish: He said I was pretty... "Like a little doll no one holds..." And I remember how I used to like Barbies when I was younger, except I used to color them with markers, cut their hair, then pull them apart, singing as I threw their arms and legs across the lawn. I felt guilty about it later. So when no one was around I'd bury them in shoeboxes marked "R.I.P." I had never been to a funeral, but I figured you were supposed to say a prayer – even though I didn't kill them – They were never alive.



Years later, he would say exactly the same thing: "They were never alive, so they weren't dead now..." But they weren't pretty anymore. No one would want to play with them ever again.

Chris: You've been through this before, haven't you?

Trish: Sometimes in class he would creep up behind me and just snatch me off my feet – for no apparent reason – so casually... For no reason at all he would just hold me up in the air... I would be quietly stunned – unresponsive – and he would say "I could never tell if you liked it when I held you that way." Oh, neither could I! My mother would tell me "That's just how you are." When I was a baby I'd cry and scream whenever she held me.

Chris: You mean when she didn't hold you?

Trish: No, when she did. I was a baby who didn't want to be touched. I was afraid of being alone, but I hated being touched.

Chris: You're making this up!

Trish: No. What time is it?

Chris: It's 11:15PM.

Trish: We talked all night. It's easy when there aren't any clocks around. I reached for my coat and got ready to go, but he pulled me over to the couch next to him and said "See Trish, you're not crying or screaming. You should let someone hold you like this – no strings attached – you're prettier than you think you are. No one tells you that."

Chris: Why did they call him the Elephant Man?

Trish: In the room... In the room there was this elephant statute. No one ever noticed it, but it was there the whole time...

Chris: So?

Trish: The whole time I was there he was wearing only a satin robe. It wasn't even tied. Blood red. A good color to paint with.

Chris: And you didn't notice this earlier?

Trish: I pretended not to notice. I looked him straight in the eyes until he said "Did I mention that I'm an exhibitionist? Just around the house, and only with women. Women I'm comfortable with... They usually react to it."

Chris: So how did you react to it?



Trish: I don't really know. I don't react to things.

Chris: Well that's what the exhibitionist thinks about. You're supposed to be shocked, turned on, or horrified.

Trish: His therapist said it was his way of dealing with the fear of castration, but I read it's all about empowerment, that's why the worst thing you can do to an exhibitionist is laugh at him. That's how you castrate them.

Chris: Poor babies... So you didn't react at all?

Trish: No.

Chris: Because you didn't want to give him the satisfaction?

Trish: Like I said, I...

Chris: You just don't react to things.

Trish: Right.

Chris: And this guy killed people?

Trish: Five.

Chris: But he let you go?

Trish: Yes.

Chris: Why?

Trish: I've thought about this for a long time, and I think...

Chris: No, don't answer.

Trish: But I think...

Chris: Please Trish, I'm sorry. Not now... It's too close to home.

Trish: What do you mean?

Chris: No... Just... No, you're more than I bargained for.

(A moment of silence passes)

Trish: So what did the elephant say the first time he saw a naked man?

Chris: (Lost in thought) Huh?

Trish: What did the elephant say the first time he saw a naked man?

Chris: (Smiling) What?

Trish: You can't actually breathe through that!

Chris: (Laughs and shakes his head) Do you know what I need?

Trish: A vacation.

Chris: Yeah. (In an affected voice) After this, I'm going to Disney World! (in his normal voice) No, seriously.

Trish: What?

Chris: A tank. Cuz that's serious firepower – The Arm of Decision – That's what the military calls it's armored machines: The Arm of Decision, because they're used to break the enemy's lines and force them to scatter. The Nazis made the best tanks. The American Sherman was nicknamed "The Torch" because they burned so easily, but the German Tiger, that's a gorgeous machine – crisp, strong lines – like a titan, like the immortal Joe DiMaggio. Built to take tremendous punishment and still perform splendidly.

Trish: What would you do with a tank?

Chris: Smash the enemy's lines.

Trish: Who's the enemy?

Chris: Crackheads, pushers, pimps and scumbags, serial killers... I know I sound like a scene outta "Taxi Driver..." During the Cold War there was a feeling of community. When it was us-against-them, you could sleep at night. Now, you can't close your eyes because it seems like everyone's being beaten, buried, robbed, or raped, and I know there's nothing I can do, but if I had a tank, I could... I don't know...

Trish: Thin out the herd...

Chris: I'm just so afraid.

Trish: Of what?

Chris: No. After what I put you through... I'm letting you go.

Trish: What are you afraid of?



Chris: In the play I wrote... In the play, I mentioned Keri, right?

Trish: Yes, beautifully.

Chris: She was beautiful.

Trish: Was she your...

Chris: No. No, she was just the counter girl at Kentucky Fried Chicken.

Trish: Your muse?

Chris: Cornflower eyes and burgundy hair... Strangely beautiful, bewildered, bored with the world, and so confused...

Trish: Was she a dancer?

Chris: I doubt it. She was a little heavy in the hips, and she wasn't exactly the brightest bulb on the Christmas tree.

Trish: No.

Chris: She'd always say "Have a nice day!" before she gave me my change.

Trish: What wrong with that?

Chris: It's backwards! Not a big deal, I just like to think of myself as a writer. I notice things like that.

Trish: When you...

Chris: I noticed she always wore the same Wonderbra to work: royal blue with a black velvet rose pattern. I'm not a pervert, really... It's just when she bent over for the sporks... I just miss her, that's all.

Trish: What happened to her?

Chris: Gone.

Trish: Disappeared?

Chris: Into thin air... No one knows anything, except she was a strange girl who wrote a lot of suicide poetry.

Trish: Maybe she just... You know...

Chris: I don't want to think about it.

Trish: I'm sorry.

Chris: No, I'm sorry.

Trish: Chris?

Chris: You see, when I first saw you at the bookstore three weeks ago, I... Well, you reminded me of her. The next week you were there again and the week after that, you weren't, so when I saw you today, I... Jesus... I don't know... I...

Trish: You were trying to protect me, weren't you?

Chris: Yeah... Yeah... In a way, I guess. I'm sorry. I'm an idiot.

Trish: This is so strangely poetic.

Chris: Listen Trish, you're ropes are pretty loose.

Trish: I know.

Chris: You'll be able to work your way out in no time. There's half a hoagie, a bottle of water, and ten dollars in the fridge. Just follow the dirt road for half a mile and you'll be right in front of the bus station. You can call a cab from there.

Trish: What are you talking about?!

Chris: You're not far from the bus station.

Trish: I heard you! You don't expect me to walk alone in the dark?!

Chris: You'll be OK.

Trish: Couldn't you drop me off?

Chris: You'll see my license plate and turn me in.

Trish: No, I won't.

Chris: You'll be fine. You're tough as nails.

Trish: I'm not.

Chris: You know, Trish, you're right - I'll take you home then go turn myself in.

Trish: No.



Chris: What do you mean, "No?"

Trish: No. Just no...

Chris: Trish, but...

Trish: Do you like White Russians?

Chris: Sure, but...

Trish: We could have a few drinks and talk...

Chris: You're not serious!

Trish: We could find the missing page. You could read me more Peter Rozing while we watered the dusty oscar swaying in the breeze in your yard.

Chris: Really?

Trish: Really.

Chris: You're crazy!

Trish: So are you!

Chris: (Untying her) Are you all right?

Trish: (Standing up, shakily) Hold me, I'm a little stiff!

Chris: (Putting her arms around her for support) Me too... Nervous, I mean.

Trish: Don't be.

Chris: (Walking her to the door) Here, take the keys to the van. I have to clean up the place. I'll be right out. (Exit Trish; Chris walks to the refrigerator, removes the water bottle and drinks, then falls to his knees) Yes! (In an affected voice) I know no one would hear me because no one ever heard you. I know you've been here before, in this very spot. You tied yourself to this same chair, just so you could scream for help, but no one ever came to your rescue. No one ever came. No one ever... (Shakes his head) Oh Pete! How do you do it?! (Shakes his head again then throws his fist in the air) It always works! (Chris rises, opens the freezer door, and a skull falls out) There you are, Keri! No time for dancing now! (Picks up the skull, replaces it, and exits)

Finis